

EPA A.I.R.E. Service Projects

The descriptions of several service projects have been included here since every community is different. Students can choose service projects listed here, use these as model to design their own, or combine these to create larger service projects. As well, due to the complexities that communities face in their planning and functioning, an evaluation tool has not been included. Students can develop their own method of evaluation, so that they are determining their project's success according to their own set standards and criteria.

Project #1

School Carpool Program

Students could design and create their own school carpool program. Parents love this because it allows them greater freedoms when transporting their students to and from school, develops community relationships between parents, and instantly recognizes students for their efforts. Student may want to complete the following checklist for this project:

- ✓ Design a survey to find out which parents are interested in carpooling
- ✓ Map out which students live near each other
- ✓ Pair up students according to proximity so that they can arrange a carpooling system
- ✓ Have a carpooling day, where students and parents can meet for food and meet each other to discuss the feasibility of the program
- ✓ Organize an exchange program for students who want to be involved but whose parents are unable to drive
- ✓ Survey parents throughout the process to determine any problems that may be occurring and create action plans to deal with those issues quickly
- ✓ Create an evaluation tool to determine the project's success: i.e. number of students involved, number of miles saved from driving, and improved safety at school because of fewer vehicles present

Project #2

Bike to Work/School Day

In some school districts, students are not allowed to ride their bikes to school. As well, in some districts, public transportation does not provide enough buses or trains for students to arrive at school. By creating a bike to school or bike to work program, both teachers and students can receive an instantaneous sense of accomplishment and pride when they are a part of a large group that is involved. Here are some ideas for starting such a program:

- ✓ Provide snacks, drinks, and available bike racks for the first day of the program. Asking businesses or city officials to sponsor the event may bring in needed funds for giveaways like free bike locks, helmets, and other safety equipment
- ✓ Develop a schedule of proposed biking dates that are nearly guaranteed to be in good weather
- ✓ Make announcements at school, advertise in a local newspaper, or use other media forms to encourage more people to get involved
- ✓ Ask local police departments for any abandoned bicycles that they could donate. These could easily be fixed and given away to students who do not have bicycles

- ✓ Host occasional 'biking around town' events where cyclists can get together and ride to parks to enjoy barbeques together
- ✓ Create safe biking route maps for students so that they are choosing the safest paths to travel
- ✓ Create brochures with information about biking laws that could be distributed throughout the community; this can lower incidents of accidents
- ✓ Ask local hospitals and medical centers to make donations of bicycle helmets to students to ensure their safe riding practices

Service Project #3

Safe Streets Directories

At a certain age, students enjoy getting out on their own a little bit more and look forward to meeting friends at parks, recreation centers, and local hang outs. By creating safe street directories, students will know which streets and sidewalks to avoid. Students can create maps of the community that show how and where to travel between their homes and kid-friendly places like skate parks and community or recreation centers. Larger versions of these maps could be posted around school so that they are highly visible to all students. Students can also create the maps, then make presentations in other classes, explaining how to use them and about the importance of walking, skateboarding, or riding safely around the community.